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THE LABOUR PARTY

Irish Nationalism

and

Labour Internationalism

By BERNARD SHAW

WITH A

FOREWORD by J. R. CLYNES, M.P.

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FOREWORD

THE Author of this Report has not attempted to deal with the Irish question in the terms of a Statute, but the weight of common-sense to be found in these pages reflects the position which the Labour Party has tried to maintain with regard to Ireland since first the Party had to deal with the question. By instinct and principle the Party has ever been on the side of Self Government, and the organized resistance to that demand has at length presented all the guilty parties with an Irish problem infinitely more difficult to settle than was the problem prior to the great war.

The present situation in Ireland is not the product of Labour policy, but no solution is likely to be found unless it travels upon the lines of that policy. The parts of the question which are rooted in history and in the spirit of Irish patriotism are not subordinated by the Labour Party when it emphasizes the labour and industrial aspects which are now a dominating part of the Irish trouble. The Party movement in Ireland travelled for a long time upon the lines of religious division and inherited political opinion. These movements are enormously modified by the social and economic factors which have entered into the problem. To the other Parties in Ireland, the Labour Party has now been added, and whatever form Irish Government may eventually assume, Labour aspirations and doctrines are sure to find defence by a strong Irish Labour Party.

Irishmen, either in Ireland or elsewhere, can turn with the greatest profit to that part of the Report which deals with the military question.

Unionists who have feared the separation of Ireland from the British Empire are driven now to understand how intense is the hostility of Irishmen to the separation of any one part of Ireland from the other parts, and those who wish to maintain Empire unity cannot now set aside the unquenchable desire for both the unity of Ireland and the government of its affairs by the Irish people.

J. R. CLYNES.

House of Commons,
May, 1920.

IRISH NATIONALISM AND LABOUR INTERNATIONALISM

DRAFTED BY BERNARD SHAW.

NATIONALISM AND THE LABOUR PARTY

THE Irish policy of the Labour Party is necessarily wider than that of any of the native Irish nationalist parties, because Labour is international. There may be the most violent opposition between the Irish Nationalist and the British Imperialist as such; but the interests of the Irish worker and the British worker are the same; and it is with their interests as workers that the Labour Party is concerned. The English Trade Unions helped to finance the great strike of the Transport Workers in Dublin just as they would have helped to finance a similar strike in Manchester or Glasgow; and James Connolly, as a Labour man, was as much at home in England or America as in Ireland. The Labour Party is not, and by its own nature never can be, a Separatist party: it is a Federalist party, and, far from wishing to detach the Irish people from the English, aims at establishing the closest possible relations between both and all the workers of the modern capitalized world. It recognizes as fully as the Irish people do that such relations must be free relations: that is, relations in which the national rights of the parties are fully established; but this condition is now accepted by the Liberal sections of the Capitalist parties, and is therefore not peculiar to the Labour Party, and not specially characteristic of it. Thus, though the Labour Party, if called on to undertake the Government of the realm, must face the entire Irish question, and will in that case set itself to satisfy Irish national sentiment as an indispensable first step towards the consolidation of the union of the workers of the two islands, its aims must carry it further than the Irish Nationalist Parties and Societies for whom this first step is also the last and only one to be taken. The mere recognition of Irish nationality can do nothing more for the Irish workers than place them in the position now occupied by the British workers; and if that were satisfactory there would be no need for a Labour Party. To the Irish Nationalist Home Rule may seem everything: to the Labour Party it is only a preliminary. The Labour Party must therefore not be expected to display the enthusiasm for Nationalism and the complete preoccupation with it which naturally mark the Irish parties. This does not mean that the Labour Party is less convinced than the Irish people that Ireland must become a

free nation.' What it does mean is that the task of the Labour Party, which is the emancipation of the whole civilized world from the tyranny of Capitalism, is so much vaster in its scope and complicated in its execution, so essentially international in its principle, that Nationalism is only an item in it, and not even a distinctively Irish item; for the Irish nation is not the only one that is struggling for self-determination.

REPUBLICANISM AND THE LABOUR PARTY

Nationalism is not the only question which is treated in Ireland as an Irish question, though it is actually a human question. For example, there is the Republican question. Irishmen are apt to forget that many Englishmen are as Republican as Mr. de Valera, and that Republicanism, represented ten years ago in Europe by France and Switzerland only, is now, outside the British Empire, the predominant form of government in the world. In England alone the Labour Party probably numbers among its members more Republicans than are to be found in the entire Irish population; so there is no danger of any lack of sympathy on that point. But the experiences of the workers under the rule of Capitalist Republicanism in France and America leave the Labour Party very cold as to the millennial hopes of the more enthusiastic Republicans. In no part of the British Empire is there such ruthless political persecution of Labour as in the United States at this moment. The clear moral for Labour is that only economic change can produce real political change: without it the French proverb holds good: "The more we change, the more everything remains the same." That is why the Labour Party does not put Republicanism in the forefront of its political program as some of the Irish parties do, and why the Overseas Dominions show no desire to change King Log for President Stork.

In any case, if Ireland is to remain a part of the British Commonwealth (the Labour Party does not regard it as an Empire), she must wait for the change from the existing limited monarchy to a republic until the other members are ready for it. It is not the kind of change that can be effected piecemeal. Those Irishmen who claim to anticipate England or Australia or Canada in this matter are committing themselves to the complete separation of Ireland from England as an independent State. Now in this they may be wise or unwise; but in either case they cut themselves adrift from the British Labour Party. The disruption of the Commonwealth may be a good thing for all parties; but it is not the job of the Labour Party. Should it be accomplished, the Labour Party will immediately seek to recombine the British and Irish workers, and unite them by as many bonds as possible.

THE LABOUR PARTY AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

The resettlement of the Irish question involves a new constitution for Ireland. If this new constitution is to work, it must be really new and up to date. A second-hand article imported from England will not do. Government nowadays is a much more complicated business than it was

at the date of the Union. Its activities have grown and spread so enormously that it is no longer possible for such parliaments as sufficed in the eighteenth century and struggled through the nineteenth with disastrous inadequacy, to cope with the social problems of the twentieth. The parliament at Westminster has fallen into contempt in England as completely as in Ireland, because it is overloaded with work for which it is unfitted, and for which its members are mostly unqualified. It leaves nine-tenths of its work undone, and bungles the other tenth pitifully; and it would do so even if its motives and public spirit were irreproachable. And exactly the same failure would result from an attempt to govern Ireland by a College Green parliament modelled on the existing British House of Commons.

The Labour Party foresees clearly that all civilized countries must be controlled industrially and fiscally in the near future, not by private financiers and Boards of Company directors in anarchic conflict with Trade Unions as at present, but by Labour parliaments of workers by hand or brain virtually representing occupations rather than geographical areas. The larger legal and cultural institutions, as well as federal matters and foreign policy in co-operation with the League of Nations, must be undertaken by Councils representing the higher common conscience and wisdom (as distinguished from the various industrial interests) of the community and of civilization at large. For parliaments, like monarchs, must have their councils for high affairs. Cabinets cannot supply their place. Cabinets are merely party organizations; and the Party system is at the end of its tether.

Now when the conception thus briefly outlined is firmly apprehended, it becomes clear at once that though the Labour parliaments, representing the physical force and more material interests of the nation, and therefore its cruder coercive powers, must be national (otherwise we should have, as at present, the tyranny of "the predominant partner" as between Great Britain and Ireland), the Council should be as supernational as possible. It will not be a body for which a person should be eligible merely because, as an average sensible miner or mason, farm labourer or railway man, doctor or lawyer, manager or banker, he or she knows where the economic shoe pinches. The present very common and very disgraceful qualification of being a rich idler will, it is hoped, be made impossible by Labour legislation; but when this happens we shall no longer be able to assume that the rare accident of high political capacity in rich individuals will provide us with makeshift diplomatists, jurists, and higher statesmen generally. These must in future come from the people without privilege of birth; and the field of selection must be as wide as possible, so that the best political minds may be available; for such minds are few and far between, and must be taken where they can be found. There is no difficulty in finding capable members for three national Labour parliaments in the three Kingdoms, or even more. But if three Councils be also established, there will have to be at least a joint committee or Conference of the three in permanent sitting; and this committee will continually tend to become the executive committee; so that it is at least an open question whether national Councils will be much more than electoral colleges to choose an essentially federal Conference. A federal parliament, like the United States Congress, might be a shorter and more familiar means to the same end.

HOME RULE FOR ENGLAND

It may surprise the less thoughtful sections of the Irish parties to hear that the English and Scottish nations need national parliaments as much as the Irish nation. But the fact is that Home Rule is as pressingly desirable in England as in Ireland. It is commonly assumed that Home Rule means Home Rule for Ireland. But Home Rule for England, is, to the Englishman, no less important. There is at present no English national parliament any more than there is an Irish one. There is a parliament of the three kingdoms in which Irish affairs have obstructed English reforms to an extent almost unbearable, and in which the Irish members have often held the balance of power. Scotland has the same grievance. The British Labour Party cannot reasonably urge the need of a separate national parliament for Ireland, whilst assuming that the present nondescript London parliament, which is neither imperial nor national, is good enough for England and Scotland. At least three national parliaments are needed in the two islands. And these three national parliaments could be made Labour parliaments by the political activity of the working classes.

THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE SEPARATISTS

But the Irish and British workers must live together when everything has been done that can be done to satisfy their national sentiment. They may even have to die together if Militarism retains its present vogue. The establishment of a formally independent republic in Ireland would not alter this natural geographical necessity. A nominally independent Ireland would be as completely entangled in the foreign policy of Great Britain as Belgium was. Her influence on it would be exercised through an Irish embassy in London which would be overshadowed by the embassies of the Great Powers, and could pretend to no greater consideration than that accorded to militarily negligible minor States. The Labour Party, which is strongly anti-militarist, and aims at superseding the secret diplomacy of the embassies by open democratic internationalism, would much rather see Ireland represented in a federal parliament of the three kingdoms, in which Irish statesmen could command a hearing and respect to which no Irish ambassador could pretend. Some such institution is inevitable in the future if the tyranny of the present governing class is to be broken in the only possible way by taking over its supernational work and doing it better.

Even in domestic affairs the necessity for the Irish, English, and Scottish workers to throw in their lot together politically is equally plain to common sense. The main obstacle is the belief common in Ireland that Irish grievances are peculiar to Ireland, and that the British workers profit by them at the expense of the Irish. The truth is that life is harder in England than in Ireland. The tyranny of the landlord is less restricted; the slums of Liverpool and London, of Glasgow and Dundee, are as horrible as the slums of Dublin and Belfast; most of the villages and country towns of Ireland are paradises compared to the mining villages of Wales and the factory towns of Lancashire; the infant vitality of Connemara is the envy of all the Medical Officers of Health in industrial England and even in industrial Europe; and even the armed escorts of the Viceroy, of which so

much has been said as a demonstration of armed force to overawe the people, are not more formidable or more unpopular than the armed escorts of Mr. Lloyd George when he visits the Clyde, though the newspapers say so much less about them. During the war every English visitor to Ireland was astonished by the freedom of life in Ireland compared with the restrictions and prohibitions and privations imposed by the authorities in England, even without counting the enormous item of compulsory military service. Not for a moment does the Labour Party seek to minimize the grievances of the Irish nation, or to excuse the abuses of Castle government which its representatives have witnessed and against which they have vehemently protested; but no genuine understanding between the two peoples can be arrived at or maintained until it is recognized in Ireland that "the English" have their share of these oppressions in such abundant measure that British elections cannot be fought on Irish grievances any more than Irish elections can be fought on British grievances, and that the only grievances that really matter much politically are the common grievances of Labour throughout the Capitalist world. As long as the Irish worker regards the English worker as a tyrant from whom he demands his freedom, the capitalists and landlords will "divide and govern." When the Irish worker sees in the English worker his fellow sufferer and comrade, the Irish question will finally escape from the romantic stage to the practical one, and cease to be a mere excuse for British Capitalist statesmen to neglect British affairs.

THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE SO-CALLED PARTITION OF IRELAND

The demand for the partition of the two islands has inevitably led to a cry for the partition of Ireland itself. As long as the divisions between Catholic and Protestant, between urban industry in the north and agriculture in the south, and between the foreign army of occupation and the native public, occupy men's minds wholly, the formation of solid Irish national parties is impossible. There is only one Labour Party in England. In Ireland there are several Nationalist parties. Sinn Féin has swept the polls on a program of Separatist Republicanism; but the figures of the municipal elections suggest that this program is less representative of the nation than that of the Dominion Home Rulers led by Sir Horace Plunkett, or even that of the old Parnellite Nationalists led by Mr. Dillon. The Labour Party's program of Home Rule All Round and Federal Union, though hardly ever mentioned because it is so easily confused with devolution and federal partition of Ireland itself, is privately held by many Irishmen to be the only stable solution. Against it Ulster Protestantism stands apparently solid and therefore practically invincible save by a violent coercion which no English Government is prepared to employ. But Ulster is not really solid. There is a fundamental division in her ranks. That is the division between Capitalism and Labour. The Ulster Labour Party is teaching the Ulster Capitalists that they cannot afford to cut themselves off from the Capitalists of the south. And the Ulster workers are finding out simultaneously that the workers of Ireland must stand or fall together and not allow their exploiters to play off the Catholic carpenters of the South against the Protestant riveters of the North. Capitalism is the

Achilles' heel of Unionism : Labour is the real bond that will make partition impossible.

Partition, however, may easily become merely an abusive name for quite beneficial measures of decentralization and local autonomy. Though there is nothing favourable to be said for a political division of Ireland into Catholics and Protestants, it is not clear to Englishmen that there is any radical objection to that division of Ireland into federated provinces which is a leading feature of Dominion Home Rule in America and Australia. It is a matter which the Irish people must decide for itself; but, however it decides, it cannot reasonably reject an internal federal scheme on the ground that it would mean a partition of Ireland. Nobody says or thinks that the division of Australia and Canada into provinces, or of the North American republic into States, all with separate parliaments, was a political operation comparable to the Partition of Poland. It may seem absurd to set up provincial governments for so small a population as that of Ireland; but the overseas Dominion populations are very small relatively to their vast acreage, though they are populated countries whilst Ireland is a depopulated one. The national rehabilitation of Ireland will put an end to this depopulation. It may even produce immigration; for the history of Ireland is largely a history of invasion; and the invaders have not only never gone back, but have become more Irish than the Irish they displaced. No settlement based on the assumption that Ireland will remain underpopulated is likely to be a stable one: Ireland may become as densely populated as England. Now in England certain politicians have been hinting for some time past at the desirability of separate provincial parliaments for the industrial north and the agricultural and residential south; and some such reconstruction of industrial areas is inevitable. But no one thinks of this as a partition of England. The Labour Party has no sympathy with the mere Orangemen of the north or with the Irish Federalists and Devolutionists who share their views. Their reasons for segregating Ulster seem unsocial, recalcitrant, and bigoted in England; but the fact that many persons desire the internal federation of the Irish provinces for bad reasons does not invalidate the good reasons for such a procedure which have prevailed in Australia and Canada. The Labour Party therefore regards the question as an open one from all points of view.

GUERRILLA WARFARE IN IRELAND

A word must be said here about the possibility of setting Ireland free by armed force. The Labour Party cannot encourage any attempt of the kind. It is possible for any subjugated nation to force on its governors the alternative of setting it free or slaughtering its inhabitants on a scale revolting to the public opinion of the civilized world. That was the utmost that could have been hoped by the organizers of the gallant little Dublin War of Independence in Easter, 1916. But the fact that all Ireland did not then rise shews that the policy of dying on the enemy's doorstep is not practicable for a nation as comfortably circumstanced as the Irish in many respects are. As to overcoming the British garrison, that is at present a military impossibility; and this being so there is nothing to be said in defence of petulant amateur sieges of country police barracks, and sniping of individual police-

men. Such useless proceedings, to say nothing of their cruelty, make the national movement ridiculous instead of making it formidable; and the Labour Party cannot countenance them in any way. Enough blood was shed in 1916 to shew that the Irish are in earnest, and to put an end to apathy. If the Labour Party is ever forced to defend itself by arms in Ireland or elsewhere, it will not play with the situation. Police and robbers is a good game for unarmed schoolboys, but a very silly one for armed men.

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR IRELAND

It is not, however, for the Labour Party to dictate to Ireland. What it may do is to place its views before the Irish people to be taken into account with the other factors in the national problem. The Irish must solve the problem for themselves with all the factors before them. To make this possible, there must be a Constituent Assembly in which the divisions of Irish opinion shall be represented as nearly as possible in the proportions in which they exist in the country. Some light has been thrown on these proportions by the figures of the municipal elections, the results of which make it practically certain that the Assembly will be elected by proportional representation. An Assembly from which the Orange Party and the Separatist Republican Party had excluded all intermediate shades of opinion could settle nothing, as its decisions would not be accepted by the country. It would have less authority even than the Convention of 1918, which, though not elected, and not popular, was representative enough to do some useful work.

The project of an Irish Constituent Assembly is not an English project. It comes from Ireland. The British Labour Party does not dictate it: it accepts it and approves of it. It has not been sidetracked by the new Home Rule Bill. If that Bill becomes law, and is put into operation, it will, like all attempts at social legislation by Capitalist governments, need a series of amending Acts to make it satisfactory or even workable. All such Acts are at best bad beginnings; and this one will certainly prove no exception to the rule. Whether a Constituent Assembly has to draft an original Act or an amending Act makes no difference to the need for such an Assembly as an organ of self-determination.

No terms of reference that the London parliament can devise can limit the discussions or affect the decision of an Irish Constituent Assembly; and it is possible that such an Assembly may, in spite of all attempts to impose a mandate on it from Westminster, and also, it may be added, of the figures of the Irish municipal elections, demand for Ireland complete political separation as an independent sovereign State. In that case the British section of the Labour Party will have nothing further to say in the matter; and the 57,626 voters of the Irish section will no doubt accept the decision of the national Assembly. But the Labour Party cannot shut its eyes to the fact that the acceptance of such a decision by the British Commonwealth, even if it could be secured, would be a very unreal business. It would actually leave the British Government freer to coerce Ireland politically, as small and militarily defenceless States are always coerced by the Great Powers, than to coerce any Dominion of the Empire. By choosing formal independence Ireland would get rid of the forms of a particular sort of oppression for

which England is now held heavily responsible by the public opinion of the world, and especially of the United States of America; but she would exchange these forms, not for freedom, but for a subjection to the dictation of her more powerful neighbours which would carry with it no more responsibility than their ruthless domination of Belgium, of Greece, and of Rumania during the war. The Labour Party therefore repeats that it cannot honestly say that Ireland would gain real independence by detachment from the British Commonwealth, and hopes that she will remain within it.

If the Assembly should agree with the Labour Party on this point, and decide to maintain Ireland's place in the Commonwealth, then the other members of the Commonwealth will be entitled to their say as to the conditions, as they will all be parties to the bargain. Ireland can reasonably ask to be retained in the Commonwealth on more favourable terms than England or Scotland if these two countries continue to neglect their political interests in the matter of Home Rule for themselves; but she cannot reasonably ask for conditions which are unattainable by them in any case. She must be content finally to be in the Commonwealth on the same terms as the others. The constitutional changes must not be confined to Ireland, though they may begin with Ireland as the hardest case. It is not easy to see how they can even begin with Ireland without either depriving her of representation in the joint concerns of the two islands or else giving her a voice in the domestic affairs of England and Scotland to which she is not entitled and which she does not claim. But until there are national parliaments for England and Scotland as well as for Ireland, and a federal parliament or permanent Conference of Councils for the three as well, no satisfactory escape from the dilemma is possible. Ireland is therefore bound in her own interests to suggest a means by which she can retain her representation in the affairs of the United Kingdom without intruding in English and Scottish affairs, and to claim representation in the present London parliament only until these means are adopted. To repudiate such representation would be a petulant act of political suicide as far as foreign affairs are concerned; for Ireland, unlike the Overseas Dominions, has no armament to make Irish embassies respected.

IRISH GRIEVANCES AND ENGLISH ELECTIONS

There is another and very strong tactical reason why the proposals of a Constituent Assembly should not be confined to the redress of Irish grievances alone. A General Election may have to be fought on these proposals; and it cannot be said too frankly that the Labour Party cannot go to its British constituents with a program which concerns Ireland alone. That has been tried by the Liberal Party; and it has always failed because the British electors have too many pressing grievances of their own to vote as if the world were perfectly happy and free everywhere except in Ireland. The proposals of the Assembly should be so detailed and complete as to be a draft Bill in everything but form; and though it is obvious that Ireland can hardly dictate a constitution for England and Scotland, yet unless it can be shewn that the Irish proposals for Irish self-government are compatible with an equal degree of self-government for England and Scotland, and will

pave the way for it if not actually include it, they will have only a sentimental interest for the British electorate. The opponents of the Labour Party will be also the opponents of Irish Nationalism; and their case against what they will call "the disruption of the Empire" and "the betrayal of Ulster" will be pleaded for all it is worth. It will be found that the British worker cares very little about Ulster, having fish of his own to fry; but he will care even less for Sinn Fein, which is openly hostile to England whilst Ulster pretends to be the British garrison. Ireland will therefore be wise if she gives the other island an interest in the Bill by affirming principles and proposing remedies which are as applicable to England and Scotland as to Ireland. Otherwise the British workers will be as indifferent as in 1885 and 1893. They will not be hostile: the Irish cause is always popular at Labour meetings in Great Britain; but it is trifling with the facts and with human nature to pretend that Irish grievances will carry English elections. There are worse grievances by far to be remedied in India and in Egypt; but their effect on British voting is negligible. The advantage that Ireland has over these subjugated nations is that she can identify her cause with that of the British workers, and make them feel that in winning her battles they are fighting their own. Only the other day the "Hands off Russia" agitation compelled the Government to stop sending arms and money to the representatives of the Russian equivalent of Dublin Castle rule. This was not mere romantic sympathy with the Russian people. It was a sense that if liberty were crushed by reaction in Russia it would be crushed in England, and by the same people. A "Hands off Ireland" agitation would succeed only on the same condition. When England sees in the Irish cause the image of her own, she will make it her own.

THE MILITARY QUESTION

The military question is one on which the Labour Party, strongly anti-militarist as it is, must accept the facts and deal quite frankly. It is impossible to treat Ireland as a separate country from Great Britain for military purposes. An invasion of Ireland would be an invasion of Britain. In view of the fact that England has more than once plunged into a European war of the first magnitude to prevent a foreign Power establishing itself in Antwerp, it is not likely that she would permit one to establish itself in Galway or Belfast. It is, of course, physically possible for Ireland to become a nominally independent State under the protection of the League of Nations, and to set up an Irish army and an Irish fleet. She would then be able to declare her neutrality in the event of war between the British and a rival Power. She could also, no doubt, ally herself with the enemy of the British Commonwealth, and join in the operations against it.

The first alternative has been reduced to absurdity by the late war, in which neutrality was utterly disregarded by the belligerents at sea, and observed on land only when the risks of violating it (as in the case of Holland) were not worth running. Sweden would have been driven into the war by the injuries done to her maritime commerce if they had not come from both sides. The United States found it impossible to hold aloof even after re-electing as president "the man who kept America out of the war." Neutrality for Ireland would be impossible as to her coasts and shipping;

and if the war were fought out on the soil of these islands instead of in Flanders, Ireland would be the cockpit.

The second alternative would simply lead either to the subjugation of England by a Power which would then dominate Ireland, or, if England were victorious, to the reconquest of Ireland. To realize the position it is only necessary to imagine an Ireland with her population increased and her resources developed sufficiently to make her mistress of the military situation in the islands, as England now is. In such circumstances Ireland would assuredly make a military conquest of England if England threw in her lot with the enemies of Ireland in a war. The law of arms is the law of self-preservation; and Ireland is no more and no less bound by it than any other country.

That this law, for the present, imposes Balance of Power diplomacy on the nations, and that such diplomacy is a polite disguise for international brigandage, is well known to the Labour Party. But the Labour Party cannot get rid of the evils of the present international anarchy by simply exposing and denouncing them. Until the League of Nations becomes a reality, and imposes peace on nations as effectually as it is now imposed on individuals, both Irish and English, Worker and Capitalist, Pacifist and Militarist alike must arm themselves against aggression, and even for aggression if their security demands it.

Under such circumstances the British Labour Party earnestly desires that the two islands should form a single unit for all warlike purposes. How otherwise will it be possible for the English and Irish workers to combine effectively in the struggle against Capitalism? If Ireland becomes a foreign Power the relations between Irish Labour and English Labour will be always difficult, and may at any moment become as treasonable as the relations between British and German Labour during the late war. As long as an Irishman cannot, *qua* Irishman, become "the king's enemy," nothing can hinder British Labour from co-operating to the utmost with Irish Labour. That advantage is not one to be thrown away for the sake of an illusory military independence.

RECAPITULATION

The attitude of the Labour Party towards Ireland is now as clear as it can be made on paper. Its points may be recapitulated as follows:—

1. The Labour Party, being federalist and internationalist, is not concerned with nations except as units of organization for Labour throughout the world. It opposes the present misgovernment of Ireland solely because it is an obstacle to the union of the British and Irish workers.

2. It claims Home Rule, under a new and up-to-date constitution, for the three kingdoms alike, and therefore appeals to the Irish workers to exercise their right of self-determination in favour of constitutional forms capable of being extended to England and Scotland, and of finally providing a homogeneous Labour constitution for the two islands.

3. It urges that Ireland shall keep in line with the Overseas Dominions on the Republican question, and on all questions on which it cannot advance alone without complete political separation.

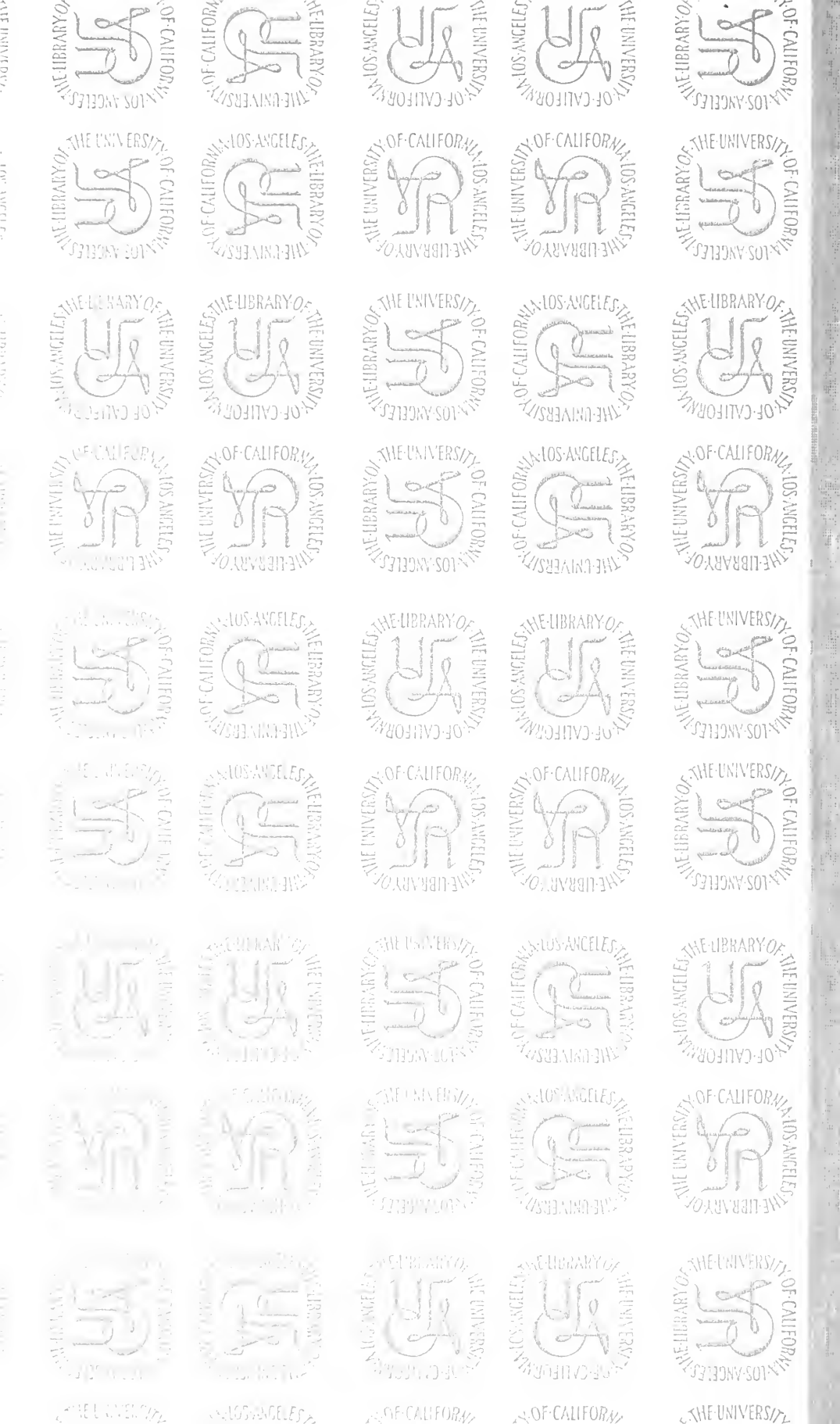
4. Whilst fully recognizing the right of the Irish nation to self-government and the free choice of its own institutions, the Labour Party reminds it that its worst grievances are common to the proletariats of the whole commercial world, and can only be remedied in close co-operation with them.

5. It supports the project of an Irish Constituent Assembly to ascertain the greatest common measure of agreement attainable between the sections of Irish opinion, and to formulate the national demands of Ireland on that basis.

6. It deprecates any attempt to exclude Ireland, whether on nationalist or imperialist prettexts, from foreign policy, federal affairs, or the defensive or aggressive military and naval resources of the British Commonwealth.

7. It presses the importance of making the Irish settlement mark a constitutional advance capable of engaging the interests and winning the votes of English and Scottish as well as Irish workers.







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